

COMPASS POINTS Foundational Belief Statements

As members of COMPASS POINTS, a network of secondary mathematics teachers, teacher educators, administrators, educational researchers, and mathematicians, we share the following foundational belief statements.

- 1. Learning:** Learning is complex, ongoing, and dynamic. Investing the time to understand students' formal and informal knowledge and habits of mind is necessary and foundational for learning and growth. Respect for students' thinking is central.

Fostering positive dispositions toward mathematics and learning is essential. Examples include motivation, curiosity, risk-taking, and perseverance. Fostering good work habits is also important.
- 2. Curriculum:** Curriculum plays an important role in developing students' mathematical competencies. Curriculum should engage students in worthwhile mathematical tasks that have multiple access points and incorporate higher-order thinking skills.
- 3. Equity:** Knowing how to think analytically and to solve problems are attainable, teachable, and essential goals for all students. These goals must be an intentional component of a mathematics program: Mathematics teaching must develop in all students better processes of thinking, communicating, and uses of technology. Mathematics is empowering and impacts students' fundamental view of themselves; thinking of oneself as being good at mathematics is an avenue to empowerment in our society.
- 4. Teaching:** Teachers need a variety of tools and strategies to reach all learners. Teachers must be flexible and willing to make adjustments in their teaching. Teachers should be committed to meeting students where they are and moving them ahead. Reflection on the practice of teaching mathematics is fundamentally important for the growth of teachers.
- 5. Professional Development:** Strong, on-going professional development and collaborative networks of teachers are essential in realizing the goal of creating highly effective teachers, reflective practitioners and sustainable programs. Professional development goes beyond implementation of the curriculum in the classroom to include involvement of administrators, counselors, other teachers, students, parents, members of the community, and higher education faculty.
- 6. Realizing Our Vision:** Successful implementation and sustainability of research-based curricula requires support from all stakeholders. Administrators, school leaders, university mathematicians, educators, and researchers alike—in addition to students, parents, and teachers—must work together to make this a reality.